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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1037
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1470
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0264
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1915
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2237
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1482
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1033
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3281
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0500
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1968
INFO RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 5752
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 4022
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 3961

UNCLAS CANBERRA 001138

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE - INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE RETURN
AND REINTEGRATION OF AFGHAN REFUGEES, NOVEMBER 19

REF: SECSTATE 118597

¶1. (U) Jon Merrill, Director of the Afghanistan section at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) told PolOff November 12 that Australia stands shoulder to shoulder with USG on the International Conference on the Return and Reintegration of Afghan Refugees. He said that Australia is prepared to support USG efforts to garner support from Pakistan and Iran for an extended reintegration window in line with that proposed by the Afghan National Development Strategy. Merrill noted that GOA would be open to a statement of support that would back the USG position. He said that GOA looked forward to demonstrating to Afghanistan's neighbors that this policy was to their benefit as well.

¶2. (U) Merrill said that return and reintegration had become particularly important issues for GOA. He offered that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) would play a central role in drafting briefing papers for the Australian delegation to the conference. He said that there is some self-interest in a solid, common sense plan for Afghan refugees because it meant that GOA would be less likely to need to deal with Afghan refugees on its shores.

MCCALLUM